

REMARKS

Administrative Overview

Claims 1–4, 6–16, 18–28, 30–40 and 42–48 were initially presented for examination. Claims 1, 7, 8, 14, 19, 20, 26, 31, 32, 37, and 43 have been amended; claims 6, 18, 30, and 42 have been canceled. Upon entry of this paper, claims 1–4, 7–16, 19–28, 31–40 and 43–48 will be pending in this application.

The instant Office Action was mailed on October 13, 2004. Claims 26, 34, 37, and 46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application No. 2004/0037509 to Wisecarver (hereinafter “*Wisecarver*”). Claims 1–4, 10–16, and 22–25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Wisecarver* in light of three previously-cited references: U.S. Patent No. 4,752,109 to Gordon et al. (hereinafter “*Gordon*”) for claims 2, 3, 27 and 39; U.S. Patent No. 4,904,046 to Paschke (hereinafter “*Paschke*”) for claims 4, 28, and 40; and U.S. Patent No. 5,631,990 to Hashizume (hereinafter “*Hashizume*”) for claims 12, 13, 24, 25, 35, 36, 47, and 48. Those claims that were not explicitly discussed are assumed to be rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Wisecarver* by itself; claims 1, 14, and 38 were explicitly said to be unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over *Wisecarver* by itself.

Claims 6–9, 18–21, 30–33, and 42–45 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were said to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections and request reconsideration of the claims in light of the preceding amendments and the discussion below. Basis for the amendments to the claims may be found, for example, in originally filed claims 6, 18, 30 and 42. The Applicants submit that no new matter has been introduced by these amendments.

Claims 1, 14, 26 and 37, as Amended, and the Claims that Depend Therefrom are now Allowable

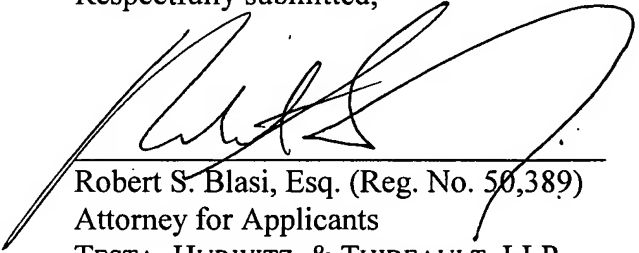
Independent claims 26 and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by *Wisecarver*; independent claims 1 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious in light of *Wisecarver* by itself.

Claims 6, 18, 30, and 42, which depend from independent claims 1, 14, 26, and 37, respectively, were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were said to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As amended, independent claims 1, 14, 26, and 37 now incorporate the limitations of dependent claims 6, 18, 30, and 42. Accordingly, we respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 14, 26, and 37 and the remaining claims that depend therefrom are now allowable.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, we respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, we respectfully request reconsideration, the withdrawal of all grounds of rejection, and the allowance of all pending claims in due course. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation with the Applicant's attorney would be helpful in expediting the allowance of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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